GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3171
ANSWERED ON:21.03.2007
SPURIOUS MEDICINES
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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Health Organisation has made an observation that one out of five medicines sold in India is fake;

(b) if so, the steps that have been taken to eradicate fake/ spurious medicines by the Drugs Control Authority:

(c) whether certain organization have submitted information to his Ministry about the methodology adopted by the drug companies; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Drugs Control Authority in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (SMT. PANABAKA LAKSHMI)

(a): No Sir, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has not made any such observation. WHO has informed that some individuals in the media and other organizations use WHO references incorrectly irresponsibly.

(b) to (d) Recognizing the need for greater international cooperation in combating counterfeit medical products, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has initiated the process leading to the establishment of an organization called IMPACT (International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Taskforce) for combating the spread of counterfeits.

The establishment of the Taskforce (IMPACT) was proposed by WHO and endorsed by 160 participants at an international conference in Rome in February,2006 representing 57 national drug regulatory authorities, 7 national organizations, 12 international associations of patients organizations, 12 international associations of patients, health professionals pharmaceutical manufacturers and wholesalers. The Rome conference issued a set of principles and recommendations, enshrined in the `Declaration of Rome`, calling for WHO to lead the establishment of IMPACT and set the conceptual framework of IMPACT and set the conceptual framework of IMPACT`S work.

IMPACT is a voluntary grouping of Governments, organizations, institutions, agencies and association from developing and developed countries, aimed at sharing expertise, identifying problems, seeking solutions, coordinating activities and working towards the common goal of fighting counterfeit medical products. IMPACT aims at ensuring appropriate regional representation, including in particular from developing countries. The first General Meeting of IMPACT was held at Bonn, Germany, during 15th and 16lh November 2006.

Further, this Ministry has already initiated the process of amending the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, to provide for stricter penalities, in pursuance of the recommendations of the Mashelkar Committee, which was set up of comprehensive review of the regulatory system in the country including the extent of problem of spurious drugs and remedial measures to deal with this problem effectively. The major amendments proposed relate to enhancement of penalties prescribed under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act. provision of special courts for drug related offences, compounding of offences, authorizing the police also to file prosecution for drug related offences and making all drug related offences cognizable and non-baiiable. All this is expected to act as a strong deterrent for manufacturers of counterfeit drugs. Government of India has also launched a 5-year World Bank aided Capacity Building Project for Food Safety and Quality Control of Drugs with a total project cost of Rs.354.25 crores. Extensive assistance is being provided to State Governments to augment their drug testing facility by way of equipments, manpower, training and civil works under the Project.